



Volunteer Centre
Swanley

2008/2009

Annual Report



***Main offices are situated in the
Library & Information building
in swanley***

we cover

Ash, Crockenhill, Eynsford, Farningham, Fawkham, Hartley, Hextable,
Horton Kirby & South Darent, New Ash Green and West Kingsdown

Aims and Objectives

The Volunteer Centre Swanley is accredited by Volunteer England and delivers the six core functions of a Volunteer Centre.

- Promotes volunteering
- Provides volunteering brokerage
- Enables participation in volunteering
- Provides information, training and research into volunteering
- Comments and campaigns on volunteering
- Develops volunteering

Mission Statement

The Volunteer Centre brings together those who wish to be part of an active, confident and caring community with those who need help within that community.

The Centre enable volunteers to give their time and skill to the local community knowing that they will received training and advice and support at all times from the Centre.

No request for volunteer assistance will be refused unless a suitable volunteer cannot be identified. Any request, which is outside the area served by the Centre or in breach of its equal opportunities policy, will be refused.

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the
Swanley Volunteer Centre on
3rd June 2008 at the
Alexander Suite, Swanley.**

1. The meeting opened with the Chairman, Cllr Mark Fittock, welcoming Sevenoaks District Council Chair, Cllr Mrs Felicity Broomby; Swanley Mayor, Cllr Mr Michael Mahy and Denise Painter of the Community Rehabilitation /Stroke Team.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Michael Fallon, MP; Derek Putman Treasurer and Cllr Hugh Darrington

2. The minutes of the AGM held on 6 June 2007 were taken as read; adoption was proposed by Audrey Gee and seconded by Inge Touboulic.

3. **Chairman's Report**

Cllr M Fittock referred to his detailed report within the Annual Report and added the following comments. He thanked particularly all those involved in the Garden Safari project which certainly helped the Centre's finances and provided a pleasant weekend for all concerned. He thanked office staff and volunteers for coping with the extra work involved in the various projects undertaken by the Volunteer Centre. Mark Fittock stated that he would not be standing as Chairman again as he has not been able to devote sufficient time to the Centre recently due to other commitments but stressed he has always enjoyed his years in the chair and intended to stay involved.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

Unfortunately Mr Putnam was unable to attend the AGM so Mark Fittock said he would endeavour to answer any questions raised in connection with the Treasurer's Report or he would pass these on to Mr Putnam. However, there were no questions. Mark Fittock spoke of the excellent work carried out by Mr Putnam which in no small way had helped to secure the Centre's healthy financial position.

5. **Centre Organiser's Report**

Pauline Annetts referred to her detailed report within the annual report and referred to the fact that the Swanley Volunteer Centre had recently signed up to the Kent & Medway Infrastructure Partnership (KMIP), which meets every 2/3 months in an effort to solve issues as a whole. The present objective is to try and reach agreement on raising the 40p per mile volunteer driver's payment.

Pauline expressed thanks to all who have helped with the various fundraising events. The sums raised last year were the highest the Volunteer Centre had ever achieved. It is hoped that this year's Charity Golf Day will continue to improve finances. Pauline also gave thanks to Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Swanley Town Council and

other Parish Councils for their continuing support. An important task next year is to start work on acquiring the Quality Accreditation again as its three years' operation has now elapsed. On the subject of volunteer driving, over 2,000 people were transported to hospitals, surgeries, etc. through the Centre.

A talk was given about the new project run by the Centre in partnership with Swanley Technology College. Della Jeffery explained that the Reminiscence Scheme has now been renamed Reflections, the reason for this was to make this scheme more accessible to both young and old alike.

Volunteer facilitator Maureen Barnett, explained how the project worked and how successful it has become. With help from the schoolgirls a recording device was successfully installed and they will be downloading the information gathered and putting it onto the College website and also the Volunteer Centres.

An application has now been made to North Kent Extra for a grant to take this project forward to other local secondary schools.

6. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Cllr Mrs Felicity Broomby took the chair for these elections.

The following officers had been nominated. All in favour of their election.

Chair	-	Cllr David Coates
Vice-Chair	-	Audrey Gee
Treasurer	-	Derek Putman.

7. Election of Trustees

Trustee appointments were listed on the papers distributed at the beginning of the meeting, with the nomination of the following new trustees: All in favour.

Cllr Fred Pettit, Farningham Parish Council and Volunteer Driver.
Mr John and Mrs Lorna Kahan, Churches Together.

Cllr Felicity Broomby gave thanks to Pauline and Della for their work in the Volunteer Centre and gave particular praise to the Calendar of Events, also to the project covered by the Reflections group. She also thanked all volunteers who gave of their time to the community.

8. Close of Meeting

Cllr David Coates thanked those present for his nomination as Chairman and thanked Mark Fittock for his hard work over the past 4 years as Chairman and for many years before that in supporting the Volunteer Centre. David Coates then presented a gift to Mark Fittock, who said that he would like minuted thanks to the Rev Richard Wells, who is shortly to retire and who started the Volunteer Centre many years ago in a tiny room at the back of his Church. David Coates closed the meeting at 1.40 pm.

Chairman's Report

Raising sufficient funds to run the centre and to ensure that we continue to provide a service for the residents of Swanley and the surrounding villages is a priority for the Trustees, and one which causes us some concern in the troubled economic climate. We shall therefore have to double our efforts in raising funds both in the tried and tested ways and in looking for new ideas.

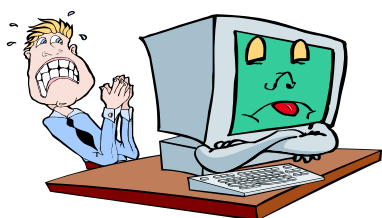
Over the year we have seen more demand for all our services. The staff have made a great effort in getting out to the villages and informing people of what we can offer them. I was involved in the 'Make a Difference Week' promoting the volunteer centre outside a couple of local Primary Schools. We got involved with talking to the parents and sometimes grandparents about the different services that we run and the need of more volunteers to help us run these services. The response was very positive.

This year has seen a further move of the office from the large room above the library to a much smaller room on the same floor. This was brought about because of the need of the Swanley Town Council to maximise the use of space available for letting in order to reduce the heavy cost of running the library. The council are however still providing us with rent free accommodation for which we thank them.

We had a very successful year fundraising, Open Gardens, Strawberry Quiz, Charity Walks and especially our Charity Golf Day. A special thanks to Sencio Leisure for choosing the Volunteer Centre as the charity for their golf day.

On behalf of The Trustees, thanks are recorded to the many volunteers who assist us and give up much of their valuable time, without them we would not exist. I would also like to thank Pauline and Della for the considerable effort put in which is beyond that for which they are paid, and our Treasurer Derek Putman who ensures that we never forget the need to be prudent.

David Coates



Centre Managers Report

The Past

In June 1999 Counsellor Mark Fittock declared open the new Library and Information Centre, the two storey building no longer just housed the Library it now had a Tourist Information Centre, Café, Adult Education suite, Community room for different organisations to use, a Tower Room in which Organisations could hold small functions and an office to house the Swanley Volunteer Bureau, as it was then called.

For many years the Volunteer Bureau had been housed in a Portakabin in the car park at Bevan Place, provided by Sevenoaks District Council, but it was always thought by the then Chairman Jack Searles, Trustees and Town Counsellors that the Volunteer Bureau should have a more prominent position in the town centre and you could not get a more prominent position than in the new Library and Information Centre.

As a matter of interest I looked through the Report from 1998/1999 and it begins: ***“This has been a challenging year. Managing the trio of goals, that is: maintaining recruitment - finding funding - and moving offices”***.

Ten years on I could start the 2008/2009 Report by saying... ***“This has been a challenging year. Managing the trio of goals, that is: maintaining recruitment - finding funding - and yes, moving offices again”*** (albeit within the Library & Information Centre).

Also in the 1998/1999 Report mention was given to a change of staff, the New Ash Green organiser, the Befriending co-ordinator and the Office Administrator were all lured away to other positions. It also mentioned that the Bureau would receive a severe cut to its funding of around £12,000. The Bureau compensated for this by cutting the working hours of the new staff, making the following years ones of change and new challenges.

Here a comparison of statistics indicates just how much the Volunteer Centre has grown within the last 10 years.

Statistics 1998/99

Volunteers placed 89

Local Volunteering opportunities 107

Drives carried out 1385

Statistics 2008/09

Volunteers placed 126

Local Volunteering opportunities 297

Drives carried out 3365

The then Chairman talked of *“an efficient Management needed to maintain an office with all it’s attendant costs, the need to attend various meetings, to lobby for funds and to provide for the needs of people with the appropriate volunteers at the right time, as well as providing a great variety of information, which takes the resources of the Bureau to full stretch”*.

- No change there then!

This leads me nicely on to...

The Present

This year has been one of the busiest, with even more people wanting to volunteer. We have had more enquiries for volunteering with the 2012 Olympics, an increase in the number of younger people wanting to volunteer, and we are beginning to see people who have been made redundant coming to us for volunteering opportunities. We have dealt with over 480 enquiries for volunteering in this year, 92 have been volunteers just popping into the office for advice, showing that our office is well placed and accessible to the public.

We have had a huge increase in the volume of drives for the transport scheme, the increase includes a more varied type of client wanting slightly more than your average visit to the doctors. They now ask if we can help them with their shopping, going to see relatives in hospitals and nursing homes, taking them to day centres and alternative treatments such as the Multiple Sclerosis hydrobaric unit in Swanley.

Through a new initiative brought in by the NHS, the new 'book and choose' system, you can now choose at which hospital you want treatment, taking hospital journeys further afield. One of the most noticeable is Kings College Hospital in London, and we have also had one or two requests for Central London Hospitals such as St. Barts, St Thomas' and Guys. Occasionally we have been able to help, but this brings the 'congestion charge' and parking fees into play, making the journey expensive for the client.

The drives this year have more than doubled compared to the figures of 1998/99.

We have also noted changes in the requests to our Befriending scheme - we now have clients that are either terminally ill or one is the carer for the other. (You can read more on this in the 'Deputy Managers Report').

Our 'Drop-in Session' programme, where we take our services to the Parishes of New Ash Green, Hartley and West Kingsdown, has continued throughout the year. Promoting an understanding of the Volunteer Centre and the services we provide is very important, especially for the isolated villages.

This year we re-introduced ourselves to the Parish Clerks by visiting them in their Parish offices taking with us our promotional literature and posters, and asking if we could put an article in their Parish Newsletters so as to reach everyone in our district. Many of our local Parish Councils make donations to our Transport and Befriending schemes on behalf of the local elderly people in their parishes. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those Parish Councils for their support.

A breakdown chart of Volunteer Drivers, Befrienders and the number of Clients we help within each village is below:

Villages	Drivers	Transport Clients	Befrienders	Befriended Clients	
Ash / New Ash Green	7	55	2	2	

Crockenhill		12			
Eynsford	1	12	2	2	
Farningham	2	12		1	
Fawkham	1				
Hartley (incl Longfield)	2	37	3	3	
Hextable	4	42	4	3	
Horton Kirby Sth Darenth	3	33	2	7	
Swanley/ Swanley Village	5	335	10	14	
West Kingsdown		39	5	5	

Funding

Our biggest thanks go to our main funders who are: Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District Council and Swanley Town Council who continue with their support and we are very grateful that they see the Volunteer Centre as a much needed asset to the community. Without their help we would be unable to continue with the vital services that we provide.



We have managed to maintain a good level of funding for this year with the second tranche of a three year grant from the Yapp Trust, continued support from The Henry Smith Charitable Trust, the West Kent PCT, St. Peters and St. Pauls Church, Personal donations, and United House who sponsor our two Newsletters and Christmas news-sheet.

Fund Raising

Our fund raising efforts this year have again been excellent. This was mainly due to the Charity Golf Day that Sencio Leisure Ltd organised on behalf of the Volunteer Centre; the total for that day alone was £2,902

Other fundraising events held were our annual Strawberry Quiz, an Open Garden in September, Boxing Day Walk, and a Spring Bulb Garden Event in March 2008, making the grand total of £3,400 - a record sum!

My grateful thanks go to all who helped with these events, making them not only enjoyable, but profitable as well.



Out and about

This year we have tried to attend as many community events as possible, including several village fetes, a sports open day at Whiteoak Leisure Centre, The 'Get Active'

website launch, Swanley Technology Schools 'Harvey Centre' Opening, an evening on behalf of Adults with Learning Difficulties 'Dreams Come True', AGM's, training, workshops, forums - the list is endless. It is impossible to attend everything that we are invited to but between us we try to make sure that Swanley & District Volunteer Centre is present at most.

Approximately 220 hours have been devoted to these events, some of which are held in the evening or at weekends.

Working together

The Kent & Medway Infrastructure Partnership (KMIP) has grown in strength throughout this year.

The Partnership came together to share good practice, networking and to improve and strengthen the infrastructure support.



ward Volunteer Centres and Councils for Voluntary Service, working together for Kent



The Kent eVents Team, this is a KCC countywide project to have a database of volunteers who are interested in helping at events throughout Kent.

This project is now one year into a three-year contract and we have already surpassed our recommended figures for signing up volunteers.

The second is the **Modernisation Project**, this is also countywide and is Kent's chance at making sure that organisations are all acting within the governments recommended guidelines, and to ensure that help, encouragement and best practice is available to all organisations.

Swanley Volunteer Centre sits on both steering groups.

Training and Forums

Through VAWK and the Modernisation Programme we were able to put on training for our new volunteers, these were 'First Aid Emergency Training' for Drivers and Befrienders, and an "Introduction to the Responsibilities of Trustees."

We continue to facilitate the Elderly Care Forums and attend KCC Social Care conferences to ensure that we are up-to-date with the new initiatives that are being introduced from the National Health Service.

We also attend the Sevenoaks District Sports Community Network, Swanley Mental Health forum and Swanley People First.

Make a difference Week

There are many voluntary events throughout the year that Volunteer Centres can sign up to, whereby you put on an event or initiate an activity or project. This year we chose to be part of the 'Make a Difference Week' our idea was to interact with parents outside

the school gates. We contacted ten Primary Schools in our area and asked if we could hand out literature on '*What the Volunteer Centre can do for you*' or '*What can you do for your local Volunteer Centre*'.

A merry band of volunteers took up the gauntlet and stood firm outside the school gates talking to the parents/grandparents, and introducing them to their local Volunteer Centre. In the following weeks we received a number of enquiries for volunteering opportunities.

The Future

My concern for next year is as always "funding." This year is the last of a three-year Service Agreement with Kent County Council. We feel sure that they are changing the way in which they fund organisations that are considered to be 'front line,' such as the Volunteer Centre. We believe that they will be looking towards similar organisations to work more closely together, either in partnerships or mergers. We anticipate a visit from KCC this year to make us aware of their proposals for future funding.

Although situated within the Sevenoaks District the people of Swanley and the surrounding villages have always gravitated towards Dartford for their Hospitals, Job Centres, even shopping. We must watch this space to see how and where KCC place Swanley.

We have made strenuous efforts this past year to build good working relationships with other organisations working in the same field as ourselves. We have good working relationships with our counterparts in Kent and will continue in this vein.

On a happier note I feel confident that the number of people wanting to volunteer this year will rise again, as it has done consistently throughout the years. The challenge for us is finding new and varied opportunities making volunteering more fun.

Thank you

My thanks must go to Della for all the support she has given me over the year, to our Office volunteers who have taken on extra duties in an effort to help with our work load, and to the Trustees in seeing me through some difficult times.

I must also thank the Town Council staff; they are extremely helpful when it comes to helping us out with venues and information. A mention must go to Jeremy and Martin at Swanley Computers for all their support in spoon feeding us over the phone when the computers go wrong or coming out to our aid the same day.

Without these people the Volunteer Centre could not function as well as it does. I hope that this coming year will be as positive as the last.

Pauline Annetts
Centre Manager

Deputy Managers Report



Changes in the office- It became apparent throughout the year that my role as Project Worker Services for the Elderly had changed dramatically. I was no longer able to meander around Swanley and the surrounding villages changing the lives of the elderly.

My new role involves being more 'multi-tasking' by dividing my hours between the office, the drop in centres, meetings, and any thing else Pauline feels the need to pass my way. In other words planning my day more efficiently. This does mean that I devote less time to the Befriending Scheme but I am lucky to have a wonderful team of volunteers that keep the clients happy.

During the summer months many weekends were spent at different village fetes promoting the Volunteer Centre. This is fine when the weather is good, but you can count on one hand how many nice weekends we actually got!

One of the new activities that I have been involved with is the Sevenoaks District Community Sports network. Many organisations get together to promote sporting activities across the District which also involves volunteering. There is now a web site launched last September called 'Get Active'. This web site enables different clubs, and organisations across the district to promote their activities. Anyone interested in getting involved can log on and look up their area and choose their preferred activity and location. I attended the sports taster day at Whiteoak Leisure Centre giving out leaflets about how to get involved in volunteering within the sports field.

Fundraising

The lead up to our biggest fundraising event this year was extremely busy. Sencio chose us as their charity for their Golf day; this meant contacting all local businesses to sponsor a hole or to donate a raffle prize. I spent many hours on the phone trying to convince managers/ directors to help us. The ones that we were lucky enough to convince then had a visit from me. We are very grateful to all those that helped make the day a success. I expect they are pleased that I have stopped phoning them!



Challenging placements

The requests that the Volunteer Centre now receives are more and more challenging but if we can help we will.

At the end of September a request came from the GB Modern pentathlon association asking for help at the South East Schools Regional Biathlon Championships. They were having great difficulties with getting time keepers, scorers to name a few of the duties needed to be covered for the event to take place. It was being held in October at the Sevenoaks School. Swanley rose to the challenge. We were able to provide 5 volunteers for the day (lunch included). The day went very well and we were congratulated on the professionalism of our volunteers.

Over the year we have been asked to find opportunities for gardeners, hairdressers and even an aromatherapist and yes we have found them all places to volunteer. We have spent quite a lot of our time meeting up with other managers, development workers from other voluntary organisations finding out about different opportunities they have, what projects they are involved with.

Befriending Scheme

The Befriending scheme is constantly changing in a demanding society. We are not just visiting the elderly in their own homes but are now being asked to take them out to the shops, parks, garden centres and even for a pub lunch to name a few.



The elderly don't want to just sit indoors if they have the chance they want to get out and about. Staying at home everyday of the week would depress most of us I am sure. If we can help we do, although sometimes this isn't always practical. Some of our volunteers would not be able to take them out due to their own health issues, no transport etc. We have been lucky enough to recruit some younger volunteers on to the befriending scheme who are able to transport the clients to places but we are always in need of more.

We now have more volunteers in the villages that we cover although the demand for befrienders is becoming more popular. We do try to match a client to a befriender from the same village which gives them a common talking point.

Most of our referrals come from the social services adult team but we are increasingly getting referrals from the community wardens that serve the villages. They are the people out and about that know the locals and can suggest the Volunteer Centre to them for company. We have suggested meeting all the Community Wardens together to explain the criteria, needs and support that we can give. Each client that is referred to us will then get a visit from me explaining how the Befriending Scheme works. Once we have a suitable volunteer I then take the volunteer along to meet the client. This process can take anything from 3 weeks - 2 months depending on the availability of the

volunteers. Each of these referrals takes me out of the office at the initial stage for 1½ days. Once the volunteer meets the client they visit or take them out on a regular basis usually weekly. On average a volunteer spends 96 hours per year visiting their client. This equates too roughly 2776 hours that my team of Befrienders spend visiting on behalf of the Volunteer Centre for their local community. During the relationship I continually support the volunteer which may include visits, telephone conversations and coffee mornings (this ensures the volunteers have a chance to talk amongst themselves) as well as keeping in contact with the client and any family member that is known to the Volunteer Centre.

In the spring the befrienders were invited along to a coffee morning in our offices. Andy Blackmore from Swanley Police station came along to talk about distraction burglary. The volunteers found it very informative and realized how many of the pointers they were doing wrong!



This is a good place for my money. No one will know it's in here!

During March I attended a Conference for the Kent Social Care Sector. This was put on by Kent County Council – Social Services regarding Self Directed Support – Your Future. Pat Huntingford – Director of Policy, Performance and Quality Assurance spoke to us all about the importance of having control over our own lives. Self directed support is the philosophy of Active lives.

Self Directed Support will transform Kent Social Services so that everyone will have more choice and control over the way they live their lives. The project is designed to ensure that people will have control over the way the money is spent, so they can plan their own lives and get the support/ services they want. People will be able to get as much or as little help in directing their own support and managing their money (Personal Budget) as they want. They could choose to have help from:

- Parents/Carers/Family
- Friends
- Kent Adult Social Care (Care Mangers)
- An External Broker
- Someone Else

In practice this seems ideal for the younger client but I have my reservations for some of the elderly clients in the community. Many get very confused at present and may not understand the full implications. How this will change the Befriending Scheme in the future we are yet to know.

Reflections Project

The start of the year continued with the project that involved working with Swanley Technology College. This was a pilot project that was intended to last 6 – 8 weeks but continued for much of the year. The transcribing of the recording took the girls a lot longer than expected due to the amount of information that they had gathered. We were lucky to receive a grant from West Kent Extra which enabled us to continue longer than expected.

At first the girls seemed very shy about asking the ladies questions but with a little help from the Volunteer Centre on some types of questions the sessions became a lot more open, for both the girls and the ladies.

Later on in the year we were all invited to go along to Parkwood School in Beechenlea Lane, Swanley. This was brought about by the fact that one of the ladies worked there in her teens and early adult hood. We were only meant to be there for a few hours. There was so much to talk about that we were all invited back another day. The caretaker of the school was very interested in the project and about the stories that the lady told regarding her time there.

Because of the joint venture with the Swanley Technology School we were invited to attend the opening of the Harvey Centre. The centre is where the girls conducted the interviews with our ladies. Part of the opening was a talk about what happens within the centre. Our project was part of the slide show that the guests were able to watch. It showed the girls interviewing the ladies with our volunteers and how the girls felt about what they had learnt from the project. All in all it seems a great success for all involved. We are still waiting for the booklets to be produced but hopefully will see some in the near future.

Our Thanks must go to Maureen Barnett and Patricia Smith for facilitating this project which was originally only going to last 6 weeks but took up most of their year.

We also held Reflection sessions in the autumn at a new venue in Russell Court Nursing home, Hartley. The manager was extremely pleased with the sessions as it made the residents use the lounge and interact with each other. The other venue was Whiteoak Court in Swanley, for the new residents. We also held three sessions at Panters in Hextable as a trial. The clients that did attend thoroughly enjoyed it but if we are to hold any more sessions there we would need more residents taking part.

Finally

Each year brings new demands on our services. I hope that we can continue to help the community as much as possible. A big 'Thank You' to all the volunteers that I work with, for putting up with me.

Della Jeffery

Calendar of Events

A list of events organised by Volunteer Centre – Swanley and District 2008/2009

MAY – Charity Walk

Further than they thought
(are we there yet!)



JULY – Strawberry Quiz

New Ash Green wins again!
Swanley must do better.



SEPTEMBER –
Charity Golf day
Keeping an eye on the golfers!

OCTOBER

Make a difference week.
“Make a nuisance of ourselves
outside school gates”



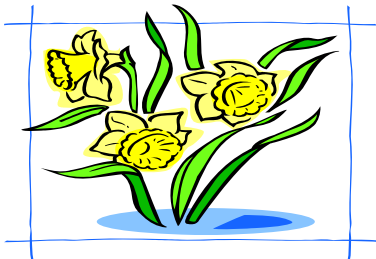


DECEMBER

Christmas Coffee Morning meeting Morris
Morris Dancers – a touch of sunshine

DECEMBER

Charity Walk with Pub stop, looking
forward to the next one with PubLunch.



MARCH

Spring Bulb Afternoon with Tea and
Homemade Cakes. Yummy

Training 2008/2009

- **Mental Health Awareness**
 - **First Aid**
- **Trustee Training**